women and women rule children, it is women who are largely held accountable by the rules of accountability made by "rational" men. But Gilligan dares to affirm that "male fantasies and images also reveal a world where connection is fragmented and communication fails, where betrayal threatens because there seems to be no way of knowing the truth."[4] Care, concern, connection contrasts sharply with talk of accountability conducted exclusively in terms of obligations, responsibilities, and contracts. Wagner's book communicates to us, but it does so in terms of a systematically distorted discourse.

Notes

1. C. J. B. Macmillan, James W. Garrison, *A Logical Theory of Teaching: Erotetics and Intentionality* (Boston, MA: Klawer Academic Publishers, 1988).

2. Arthur E. Wise, *Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of The American Classroom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. xv.

3. Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 44.

4. Ibid., p. 45.

Responsive Teaching: An Ecological Approach to Classroom Patterns of Language, Culture and Thought. C. A. Bowers and David J. Flinders. New York: Teachers College Press, 1990. Pp. v, 271. $39.95; $18.95 (Paper).

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In their book, *Responsive Teaching,* Bowers and Flinders place Western consciousness and its presence in everyday classrooms under the microscope. This is the fourth volume in a series edited by Jonas Soltis entitled "Advances in Contemporary Educational Thought." Bowers' and Flinders' criticism of many of our tacit taken-for-granted cultural assumptions is reminiscent of Peter Berger's *The Homeless Mind* (1974), and draws heavily on the insights of Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972). But *Responsive Teaching* is an analysis of a different hue that extends ideas in these earlier books in ways that are meaningful for educators. The central cultural assumptions explored are those of the nature and grounds of knowledge, the nature of language, and the nature of the individual. Assumptions about each of these relate to the others,

but for the purposes of critiquing the authors' position I shall attend to each separately.

The authors contend that Western schools and societies value knowledge that is essentially rational, objective and linear. In schools we promote the idea of knowledge as thing-like to be coveted and possessed by the good student. We test students to gauge their competence, and all too often we judge school effectiveness in terms of "input-output" relations. Schools and students are, to all intents and purposes, considered to be like machines.[1] Computers and technology, along with the printed word, reinforce the notion of knowledge as value-free. In contrast with this dominant view, the authors argue that knowledge is culturally grounded. We are deceived into thinking the status quo is the way things must be, instead of recognizing it as our creation, and but one of many possible ways of being. "The technology of the new 'information age' encodes centuries-old masculine biases about competence, decision-making and competition" (p. 181). The authors see modern consciousness as so imbued with a blueprint for technical rationality or a Cartesian,[2] masculine way of thinking that we are generally unaware that our most basic ideas about knowledge are culturally constructed.

Bowers and Flinders contend that a responsive teacher is able to examine critically what is taken for granted in school, to bracket and recognize the appropriateness of particular ways of knowing in relation to students' cultural experiences.[3] For example, instead of engaging automatically in repetition, drill and practice, which is essentially a "rational, Western and masculine orientation to understanding how people learn" (p. 59), it behooves the teacher to consider the cultural backgrounds and individual differences of his/her students. Ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, social class, family, group or neighborhood ties of both teachers and students may be critical aspects of the classroom ecology. The responsive teacher views the classroom as a collaborative affair, a mental ecology made up of linguistic and cultural patterns, including the ideas, values and interests of the people in it. S/he is sensitive also to interests and purposes implicit in curricular content, media and any other resources used in the classroom, including language itself.

The authors' second main concern is language. As with knowledge, they regard language also as value-laden and related to culture: "the language of the culture provides the shared set of preunderstandings that will guide the interpretations the individual makes of new experiences" (p. 32).[4] They argue that cultural assumptions are deeply embedded in language so that people are often not aware of these preunderstandings. Feminists have also drawn attention to the androcentric "reality" that prevails in our society. They find evidence for this in the sexist foundations

of the English language, largely hidden, but serving to oppress women. An ecological approach to language recognizes this value-ladenness. Instead of naively assuming, for example, that language merely *conveys* ideas and information, an ecological view acknowledges that language can, in and of itself, transform ideas by its very nature as a cultural code. For instance, the language of computing, which includes terms such as "bomb," "collisions," "execute," "exploded file," "target," "trap" (p. 41), has military overtones which may "be culturally less accessible for female than for male students" (p. 50). Likewise, to a Sioux Indian the word "competition" may evoke understandings at odds with the dominant Anglo meaning of competition (p. 59).

The different ways phenomena or problems are conceptualized can lead to quite different responses. Bowers and Flinders use Donald Schon's[5] example of different ways of framing a social problem, viz., housing in the 1950s. One view was to use a medical metaphor to describe community housing, in which slum housing was seen as diseased. The solution was to eliminate the "disease" and replace the existing buildings with new ones. An alternative view was to think of the community as an *ecology* containing both positive and negative elements. This way of framing the problem led to a solution of nurturing some aspects of the community and restructuring others (p. 39).

A third cultural assumption challenged by Bowers and Flinders is that of humans as dominating and controlling nature. This view has also been a long-time concern of feminist theorists. One of the key assumptions underpinning feminist research is that male dominance and women's oppression not only has an effect on the social world of men, women and children, but also on the natural world. In other words, decisions made in the social world are projected outwards onto the natural world. Thus, the Eurocentric, male,[6] mechanistic point of view dominating Western society is linked with contemporary ecological problems. The list of problems is extensive: acid rain, the use of fluorocarbons, global warming, pesticide poisoning, ozone holes, the greenhouse effect, the destruction of rainforests, the rape of the environment in general, and so on. Bowers and Flinders take up this issue, arguing that our society's mechanistic and exploitative frame of mind, even with nonrenewable resources, is part of a competitive and individualistic "anthropocentric view of the universe" (p. 245), rather than a cooperative and socially concerned way of thinking, feeling and acting.

Our current views on the purpose of education are imbued, they argue, with Cartesian assumptions. The authors discuss three dominant traditions: the technocratic argument, i.e., education as a business/marketplace, an outgrowth of the work of Frederick Taylor and B. F. Skinner;[7]

the academic-rationalist argument, i.e., education as preparation for informed citizenry, articulated by Mortimer Adler and E. D. Hirsch, Jr., amongst others;[8] and the critical-pedagogy argument, i.e., education for radical reform of society, as expressed by Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren.[9] While seemingly differentiated, these traditions share common assumptions that have, the authors claim, "massively contributed" to the ecological crisis (p. 236). First, they all rely on the premise of individual rationality, taking seriously "only explicit forms of knowledge" and valuing "ideas and techniques that are represented as context-free" (p. 242). All three positions privilege humans over nature, by assuming we can be detached observers and by assuming the "right to exercise unilateral control over the whole" (p. 243). Second, all three traditions posit the individual as the basic social unit, whereas Bowers and Flinders' analysis takes a social-interdependency position which includes the natural world. Third, change is equated with progress in the dominant schools of thought. The authors point out, however, that change has not always been positive.

Inspired by Gregory Bateson's critique of humans' pathological relationship with nature, Bowers and Flinders argue: "the evidence of environmental disruption and system breakdown is a clear message that our most basic cultural assumptions are going to have to be reexamined and, in many instances, reconstituted in ways that take into account the *interdependence of culture and natural environment*" (p. 249). While Giroux, McLaren and others may balk at being associated philosophically not only with E. D. Hirsch, Jr., and the academic-rationalists, but also with B. F. Skinner and the behaviorist, scientific-management tradition, there is much food for thought here which is worthy of further research and discussion.

The educational implications of Bowers and Flinders' position are clear. The "old patterns of thought" that dominate our educational systems should be infused with new concern for humans as part of, rather than above and controlling nature. In my own research,[10] I witnessed first hand how different schools conceive of this (and other) values differently. One school, College Prep, fostered the idea of humans in control of nature. Progress was to be achieved through individual and competitive use of the environment. The other school, Steiner School, started from a position of humans as part of nature. This even involved the children offering daily verses at an altar-like nature table to the "sun, moon, stars" and "beasts that live and feel." While not everyone may feel comfortable with such a direct display of what some might call "nature worship," the basic premise of human interdependence with nature[11] throws into relief alternative ways of conceptualizing human existence. Bowers and Flin-

ders stress the importance of new metaphors, new ways of looking at our relationship with nature that are sensitive to our place in nature: "for educators, transmitting the old patterns of thought (even when dressed up in progressive-sounding metaphors) would be a catastrophic mistake" (p. 249).

The contrast between a technicist, mechanistic, Cartesian, management point of view and an organic, interdependent (Batesonian) view is a provocative common thread running through this work. The latter view counterpoises individualism with group welfare; the nuclear family with alternative group means of child raising; a linear sequential pattern of thinking with an organic, holistic style; and mechanical, linear time with rhythmic cyclical patterns. The book explores multiple ways of knowing.

Implicit in Bowers' and Flinders' work is a firm commitment to qualitative research and the naturalistic paradigm. For those working in this tradition, *Responsive Teaching* offers a rich source of ideas; however, if you are looking for extended discussion of fieldwork, interviews and methodological concerns that are the hallmark of qualitative research you may be disappointed. Included are many observations of teachers; e.g., Jane Owen, an English teacher at a "middle-class suburban high school" (p. 153), Kathy Robinson a "3rd grade teacher" (p. 149), Paul Arkwright, a "high school literature teacher." Yet we are given few details of the context in which these teachers work, the schools, the students, or their own backgrounds. Notwithstanding, Bowers' and Flinders' use of others' research, their own obvious long-term involvement with actual schools and people in them lends the research the feel of credibility. Many of the studies reported in Courtney Cazden's *Classroom Discourse* (1988), for instance, are also included in *Responsive Teaching*. Fred Erickson's[12] analysis of an interaction between a black student and a white counselor (p. 85); Susan Philips'[13] account of an Anglo teacher with Warm Springs Indian children (p. 86); Mary Budd Rowe's[14] research on teachers' "wait time" after questioning (p. 89); Heath's[15] study of differing language patterns in black and white working-class families in one community (p. 74); and Sarah Michaels'[16] work on black first-graders' episodic narrative style in contrast to the topic-centered narrative style favored by white teachers (p. 101) are just a few of the key studies included.

Responsive Teaching is an important book. It gives close attention to cultural differences and reports much of the research in this area. But it also offers original thoughts about school and society. Our cultural heritage is held up for examination; many hidden assumptions of the dominant culture are made problematic. Gender distinctions; technology as a neutral tool; the individual as a rationally autonomous and self-directing being; and modernization, change and progress as positive phenomena

are bracketed. The book provides new insights into the degree to which prevailing norms are male, linear and rational (a legacy of Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Newton and others). The dualistic nature and separateness of this thinking (mind *versus* body, facts *versus* values), are shown to be seriously impoverished. The book leads the reader to entertain alternative views of knowledge, language and the individual. It provides an alternative cultural metaphor of interconnectedness, or what Ray McDermott calls "people being environments for each other," to replace the dominant metaphors of separateness.

Notes

1. Richard Gibboney's commentary "Education of Administrators: An American Tragedy," *Education Week* (April 15, 1987), 28, also focuses on the dominance of a business/skills model in education at the expense of ideas and creative, responsive thinking.

2. "Cartesian" refers to the work of Rene Descartes (1561–1626), the French logician/mathematician, who "helped lay the foundations for a way of thinking about a mechanical universe that could be subdivided into ever smaller component parts whose movements could be observed and measured" (p. 5). Thus, Cartesianism attests to rational knowledge in a rational world.

3. Much feminist literature, such as Mary Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic, 1986), and also the work of micro-ethnographers, such as Ray McDermott, have similar underpinnings. See R. P. McDermott, "Social Relations as Contexts for Learning in School," *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (2) (1977): 198–213.

4. Understanding language in its social context is the foundation of Dell Hymes' work on the ethnography of communication. See, for example, J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

5. Donald Schon, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Solving in Social Policy," in Andrew Ortoney (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (England: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic, 1983).

6. Also see Evelyn Fox Keller, "The Wo/Man Scientist," in Richard Bjornson and Marilyn Waldman (eds.), *Papers in Comparative Studies 6* (The Ohio State University, 1989), 109–118 [reviewed in this issue]. She points out that the values shoring up conventional science are male, "a heritage of the cultural equation between 'scientific' and 'masculine' that has helped shape the history of modern science."

7. An example is Madeline Hunter's *Mastery Teaching* (El Segundo, CA: TIP, 1986).

8. Mortimer Adler, *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1982); E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

9. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1974); Henry Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Granby, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1988); Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1989).

10. Mary Henry, "Private Schools and the Hidden Curriculum" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Virginia, 1990).

11. See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), particularly pp. 483, 484.

12. See Fred Erickson, "Talking Down: Some Cultural Sources of Miscommunication of Interracial Interviews," in Aaron Wolfgang (ed.), *Nonverbal Behavior: Applications and Cultural Implications* (New York: Academic, 1979); and also, Fred Erickson, "Gatekeeping and the melting pot: Interaction in counseling interviews," *Harvard Educational Review* 45 (1975): 44–70.

13. Susan Philips, *The Invisible Culture: Communication in Classroom and Community on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation* (New York: Longman, 1983).

14. Mary Budd Rowe, "Wait Time: Slowing Down May Be a Way of Speeding Up!" *Journal of Teacher Education* 23: (1986): 43–49.

15. Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (New York: Cambridge, 1983).

16. Sarah Michaels and James Collins, "Oral Discourse Styles: Classroom Interaction and the Acquisition of Literacy," in Deborah Tannen (ed.), *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse* (Norwood: Ablex, 1984).

Rediscovering America's Values. Frances Moore Lappé. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989. Pp. 325. $22.50.

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Frances Lappé has written a scholarly, thought-provoking book, but she has given it the wrong title. *Rediscovering America's Values* implies an original knowing of the values as she describes them, but America's history yields few instances of action that illustrate the application of Lappé's value position. A more apt title might be *Transforming America's Values*. As evidence, consider the purpose, philosophic argument, and structure of Lappé's text.

Lappé claims that the pressing problems of individual cynicism and socio/economic conditions, such as poverty and homelessness, require a different value mindset than the one currently held by most Americans. She invites readers to transcend ordinary thinking and to reflect upon the basis of that thought, thereby identifying the core values upon which commonplace decisions rest. The fundamental question which Lappé asks readers to examine is "How do we conceive our personal nature in relation to the communities we inhabit" (p. 7). In essence, she asks readers to examine the ethical system that perpetuates the social context of their lives.

Using an imaginary dialogue to construct the two positions of the argument, Lappé breathes life into two voices: the traditionally-held view

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